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# INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT SED Propaganda for the National  
Front among Factory Groups

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1. The workmen in many factories maintain a reserved and distant attitude in opposition to party propaganda. However it is often possible, by means of clever measures, to affect the frame of mind of the workers or so to neutralize them that they show more tolerance in their opposition to the efforts of the Agit-Funktionäre. At such times the attitude and opinion of the mass suddenly reverses itself and declares itself to be for the measures of the party etc., agrees to or puts up with them, or adopts them wholeheartedly for hours or for days. Often, when this happens, thoughtful and skeptical men are isolated and frequently it is at this time that denunciations are made. This reversal of attitude is particularly noticeable after well organized factory programs, after movies and cultural programs or also after visiting new community projects. Most of the workers then keep up this changed attitude until the next work day; but also frequently, a few hours thereafter, renewed serious doubts appear. It is at these times that counter-propaganda has its greatest effect.

2. [redacted] the propaganda program in connection with the idea of the National Front is planned on a long term basis and is intended to establish the groundwork for present measures necessary to the democratic stage of development in the East Zone. The National Front program consists of a considerable number of separate themes, each of which is to be emphasized more or less according to the particular situation at the time. For instance, the question of the alliance between the worker and the intellectual is being analysed in factory group discussions from the practical point of view before studying the political significance of this problem. In fact, the National Front idea is at first only to be developed along the lines of the old problem of a union between the S.D. and other parties and organizations. [redacted] that in no factory has there yet been any successful work beyond this first approach. This is apparently because the party has not yet succeeded in clarifying this question in the light of the party program.

3. The majority of the workers see in the National Front an attempt by the SED to create a wider field of action for the old Democratic Bloc under the aegis of a new nationalism. "That has not been accomplished up till now will be accomplished by using the methods of the Nazis." Thus the idea is widespread in the factories that the SED is endeavoring to obtain legal recognition for its Bloc policy without being prepared to admit that more concessions of a substantial nature are indispensable to the other parties. The striving of the party for

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unity is brushed aside with the observation that unity under the SED can never be but a unity of compulsion. Similarly, the latest explanations of the Parteivorstand concerning the cessation of expropriation and land reform are answered by even the simplest workers who say that the SED will go back on these promises as soon as it can once more permit itself to follow a less popular policy.

4. A factor which should not be under-estimated is the attitude of the SED members themselves within the factories. Nowhere in the factories do the party members and other workers work with any sharp separation between them. There is thus a constant and active exchange of opinion, during the course of which the party members are very closely watched by their colleagues. Since these conversations are carried on, on the one hand by non-socialist elements and on the other by un-organized old socialists and communists, party members find themselves obliged to pursue arguments of varying kinds. It is therefore frequent that a former German nationalist will be convinced by the honesty of the National Front policy, whereas an old Communist will be confidentially told that the National Front is merely a matter of timely expediency. Such statements are naturally not kept secret but are passed on from mouth to mouth with the result that all party matters are accepted with the greatest mistrust.
5. The attitude of the party members is naturally known to the Parteivorstand. About one year ago the latter started a broad educational program within the party which was intended to furnish party members with what was considered to be the most important weapon in handling all discussions. The main goal of this program was to show the necessity of establishing the National Front. A secondary object was to destroy the acceptance by less intelligent members of the idea that it was merely a tactical move on the part of the Party. The Party knows only too well that a large number of the members are on the one hand not sufficiently disciplined and on the other too class conscious for them to carry out the program of the National Front wholeheartedly and in a tactically correct manner, in spite of the fact that they may realize the necessity for this program. Through clever guidance, the line of propaganda was changed during the course of the past year from one of political alliance to one of a National Front. The more discerning members of the party yielded more or less quickly to this new line which, above all, required that old socialist traditions be placed in the background. Such an acceptance, however, seldom took place without some grumbling. Above all, the presence of former Nazis in the factories creates a difficult problem. Even now it is very difficult to find a place for a politically questionable expert even when his services are required in the interest of the factory.
6. Since, as shown above, the attitude of the basic units and of not a few SED functionaries cannot be hidden from the rest of the world, and as, in consequence, the main line of party propaganda is threatened, the party committee came to the decision that alongside of the intensification of education in particular cases, measures should be taken against members who thus offend against the party line. Since about April 1949, the attack against sectarianism acquired a special meaning within the party. This attack will be particularly significant whenever members or basic units do not unconditionally follow the party line in connection with the fight for the National Front.
7. To sum up, the following conclusions may be made with regard to the National Front:


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- a. Most indifferent workers consider it to be purely a Party measure, although carrying out certain points of this program may seem desirable. Because of the attitude of the lower party organizations and of most members, the National Front program will be given a non-Communist appearance, thus enabling the Party itself to initiate counter-propaganda, which must not be underestimated.
- b. The party members perceive, in part, the necessity for the National Front. This section of the party accepts the necessity of these "steps on the road to socialism", each one doing so more or less cleverly according to his capability of handling such a reversal. The greater part of the party goes along with this new line on grounds of discipline, although it is all too confusing from an ideological standpoint, for them to grasp the true meaning of the National Front to the party, and thus for them, under these circumstances, to carry out properly the measures required by the National Front policy. A third section of the members submits only grudgingly to the new line and opposes it both within and outside of the party.
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